



PRAISE FOR *SAVING BEN*

“This is an amazing story that at times makes you hold your breath. Although the author of this book intended to help other parents and professionals deal with autism, he accomplishes more. He shares his personal story of his struggle with his sexual orientation; he exposes the long term devastating effects of child abuse as experienced by his wife and mother of Ben; finally, he lends insight into the stress experienced by any family dealing with a special needs child. As a former Executive Director of two major nonprofits in the Tulsa Community, I applaud Dr. Burns for his brutal honesty and willingness to expose his own successes and failures with Ben and in his life. Once you pick up *Saving Ben*, you won’t want to put it down until you finish every page of this inspiring story.”—**Claudette Selph**, former Executive Director of Tulsa Boys’ Home and The Parent Child Center of Tulsa

“Saving Ben is deeply touching and is another example that shows that only we as parents determine how far our kids with autism can go in their development. With love, determination, perseverance, knowledge, and faith, dedicated father Dan Burns was able to break through barriers and prevent his son from being institutionalized. Being pushed to the breaking point more than once, alone, against all odds, he never gave up and ultimately succeeded. I feel humbled when I am reminded about the challenges that Dan had to face twenty years ago. In these days we have much more information on treatment options for autism, be it behavioral or biomedical—we just need to do the work!”—**Rebecca**, Founder of Parents Defeating Autism

“Author and father Dr. Dan Burns tells the story of saving his son from the isolated and misunderstood world of autism. Dan’s approach to recovering Ben employs a full-time systematic approach using ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) therapy and biomedical intervention, making use of the scarce resources of time and money. Despite a fractured marriage, he and his ex-wife have put Ben’s recovery above their own needs, and strive to provide a consistent environment for Ben. Dan then embarks on researching the cutting-edge treatments for autism, and refuses to let Ben slip into his own world. This story is the heartfelt, real-life story written from a dad’s point of view. Dan Burns is a ‘warrior’ Dad, and stopped at nothing to help his son. This book is a great read, and inspirational, teaching us that we can overcome obstacles with faith, hope, and determination.”—**Lisa Hunter Ryden**, NAA (National Autism Association) Central Texas Chapter

“Saving Ben is a must read. It is not just a story of Ben and his struggle with autism, it brings to light the stress and challenges that trying to recover an autistic child brings upon a marriage and a family. I cringed at times at the words that were written, but the more I read the more I understood—the author tells the truth. Inspirational but not always comfortable, the author’s truth, for many, is our truth too. We all find ourselves battling for money needed to care for an autistic child while balancing work and family. Many of us are fighting to keep the marriage together because recovery is more obtainable as a team. I applaud Dan for his courage to speak the truth and for never giving up on Ben. And I applaud Ben and all autistic children for enduring the not-so-understanding world and for putting up with us parents as we frantically look for the final piece to our child’s puzzle. This book is a gift—and a challenge to dads. Fathers of autistic children will learn what challenges and rewards may lurk ahead, while fathers of neurotypical children may learn to appreciate what they have. Saving Ben tells the whole true story.”—**Kevin McNaught**, father of an autistic child.

PRAISE FOR *SAVING BEN*

“Dan Burns has been a professor, software engineer, writer, father of two grown children, husband, single parent, gay man of intense spirituality and ferociously determined advocate for his autistic third child, Ben. In *Saving Ben*, all these roles play their parts in ‘recovering Ben,’ a term Burns uses frequently. *Saving Ben* is the extraordinary story of a father's fierce determination to restore his son's health and his place in society when no one believed it was possible. Dan persisted. Ben is now twenty-one. His painfully sensitive hearing has been cured, he has language skills, laughs with his family, bicycles with his dad, and has self-care skills beyond the reach of ‘unrecovered’ autistic children. Although this is Ben's story, it is also Dan's. It's the story of the transformation of love. Any parent will be humbled and inspired by the honesty, perseverance and love this father found in himself. And used to recover Ben.”—**Beverly Voss**, LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker), poet, and InterPlay teacher. She has had a private psychotherapy practice in Austin for thirty years.

“*Saving Ben* is an extraordinary chronicle of one man's unimaginably difficult and painful struggle to deal with the forces that threatened to take away his humanity. It is really three stories—the primary story describes Dan's dawning realization that his son Ben is autistic, how he dealt with that realization, and his incredibly tenacious efforts over many years to find some way to enable Ben to function and to get beyond the stereotypes of the day's view of autism. The second story concerns Dan's coming to grips with the implications of his homosexuality. The third story details the ramifications—for Dan, Ben, and Dan's wife Susan—of Susan's having been sexually abused as a child. Each of these secondary stories is tightly bound into the book. In spare, and what is sometimes eerily cool prose, Dan narrates the events, decisions, and actions that shaped his response to the facts of these intertwined, compelling stories. After reading the book, I was left with these overwhelming questions: How did Dan Burns survive these onslaughts on his very humanity? How could he continue to cling to his vision of “*Saving Ben*”? And how would I have fared under those circumstances?”—**Scribner Messenger**—father of two adult learning-disabled daughters.

“Powerful and inspirational, *Saving Ben* is the story of one father's journey to hell to rescue his son from the grips of autism. As a mother of a formerly autistic child, I could not put this book down. Filled with triumph and tragedy, Dan Burns tells it like it is, raw and real and with brutal honesty. For him, as for many of us, failure is not an option. Armed with this attitude and the guts to do whatever it takes to save his son against all odds, miracles occur.”—**Nancy Master**, mother of a formerly autistic child.

“This book is a must read for every professional who works with autistic children. It won't make you feel all warm and cuddly like a *Little House on the Prairie* episode. What it will make you feel is amazed—amazed and blessed, especially if you are a parent. I grew up with Dan Burns in the beautiful little town of Stillwater, Oklahoma. In reading his and Benjamin's story of ordeal and triumph, I caught myself wondering if other people that grow up with heroes ever look back and wonder how they could have missed seeing someone so exceptional daily without ever knowing it. For Dan Burns is exceptional in his determination to help make a life for his son and in his unconditional love. *Saving Ben* will keep us humble!”—**Linda Evans, Ph.D.**, Psychologist, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH TEXAS PRESS

